

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE


WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

NFAC #6748-81
23 October 1981

National Intelligence Officers

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Chairman, National Intelligence Council ²⁶/₁₀

FROM: 
National Intelligence Officer for Economics

SUBJECT: Yamal Pipeline

CIA analysts have been exploring further the question of whether and how construction of the Yamal pipeline might be delayed. These are some preliminary results.

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Attachment,
As Stated

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MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Impact of US Export Licensing Decisions on Completion
of the Yamal Pipeline

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1. [redacted] US refusal to license key compressor components for the Yamal pipeline would not delay completion of that project. Previous estimates of delays of about two years in acquiring denied components from European suppliers appear to be correct; nevertheless, even with such a delay the compressors would be available soon enough to complete the pipeline about on schedule.

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2. [redacted]

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(1) If the US government refuses to license exports of key US-produced components for the GE compressor now planned to be used in the Yamal pipeline, the Soviets will quickly turn to the Rolls Royce RB211 as a substitute, with little degradation of results.

(2) They could also contract to have the embargoed components produced in Europe, even though this might take four years or so compared with less than two if these were obtained from GE. This would give the Soviets an option both for this and subsequent pipeline projects.

(3) The compressors or major compressor components could be installed in the last stages of the pipeline construction process. Since it would take at least four to five years to build the pipeline, the availability of compressors need not be a cause of delay.

(4) Delays of one to two years in construction time are in any event likely, not because of unavailability of compressors, but because of difficulties with weather, terrain, and inexperienced construction labor.

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3. [redacted] suggests that the US lacks the instruments necessary to delay completion of the pipeline through unilateral action.

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We may complicate the construction problem, but probably nothing more. We know of no evidence supporting a contrary view.

4. A more detailed analysis will be available on Monday, 26 October.



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